

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1956

4278

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ADMINISTRATION
INFORMATION SERVICE
150 Broadway
New York 7, New York

13 R A F

S E M I L

APR 15 1947

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
PRODUCTION & MARKETING ADMINISTRATION

Y O U R F A M I L Y ' S F O O D

For the week of March 31, 1947

(Topics of the Week:

Maple sugar and sirup

Plentiful Easter Edibles

ANNOUNCER: ...YOUR FAMILY'S FOOD...a program designed to keep you informed on factors affecting your daily food supply, and brought to you by Station _____, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. At the mike with us today is _____ of the _____ office of the Production and Marketing Administration. A bright and cheery good spring (morning) (afternoon) to you, _____. What do you have on today's docket?

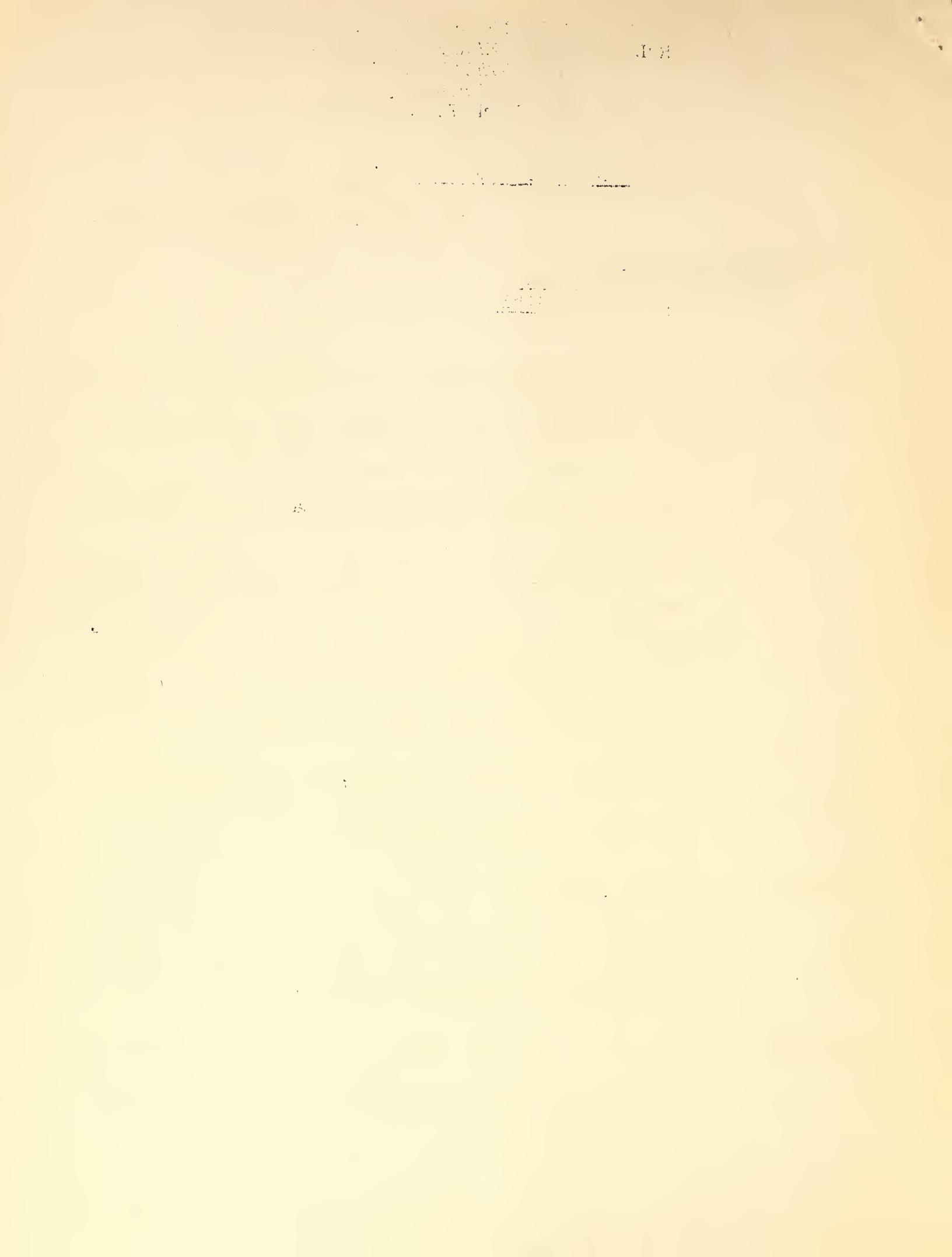
PMA: You've already set the scene of the first act of our food drama for this week.

ANNOUNCER: I did. How?

PMA: Remember you referred to this as a bright and cheery spring (morning) (afternoon)?

ANNOUNCER: Why, so I did. You mean you're going to talk about (quote) the "season in which vegetation starts anew." (end quote).

PMA: That definition only fits in certain parts of the world you know.



ANNOUNCER: All right, if you want to improve on the dictionary, you can say "here in the northern hemisphere." Does that suit you?

PMA: The part about the northern hemisphere is especially appropriate, because this morning we're going to reveal all about a product which is produced only in the northern part of the United States and Southeastern Canada.

ANNOUNCER: Oh, oh. Local crop makes good, huh?

PMA: That's the idea.

ANNOUNCER: Well, just what is this exclusive commodity you're beating around the bush about?

PMA: It's not exclusive at all. You've probably enjoyed it often. Maybe even had some as recently as this morning. That is, if you had pancakes or waffles.

ANNOUNCER: You don't mean maple sirup, do you?

PMA: I most certainly do. Not only sirup, but also maple sugar.

ANNOUNCER: Now tell me what maple sugar and sirup have to do with spring.

PMA: Just this, _____. In late winter and early spring, maple trees are tapped for their sap.

ANNOUNCER: Ah, now I see the puzzle all fits together very nicely. This being early spring brings us to the

ANNOUNCER: middle of the maple sugar season.
(continued)

PMA: That's the idea. Of course, if you want to sound really professional, you'll say this is "running off" time.

ANNOUNCER: I'd imagine that "running off" time must be a pretty busy season up in Vermont.

PMA: Yes it is, rather. You may refer to Vermont maple sirup, but don't slight the other nine maple sugar producing States in the Union.

ANNOUNCER: I suspect most of them are right here in the northeast region.

PMA: All except three. Vermont and New York produce the greatest quantities of maple sirup and sugar. Next in order of highest northeast production comes Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, and Maryland. The other three States I spoke of are Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin.

ANNOUNCER: Well, I don't suppose the commercial production of maple sugar products is a very large industry.

PMA: No, _____, it isn't. With many farmers it's a side line to help take up the slack during the slow spring season. As a matter of fact, production of maple sugar products has generally been on the decline ever since it reached its peak in 1918.

ANNOUNCER: Why is that?

PMA: Through the years fewer trees have been tapped. Many of the maple trees available for tapping have been neglected. And then, too, the number of sugar maple trees has also declined.

ANNOUNCER: Probably the demand for maple lumber is one cause for that decrease.

PMA: Yes. Maple wood has brought high prices, so that many owners have cut and sold their trees.

ANNOUNCER: Well, couldn't that be remedied by planting new maple stands?

PMA: It could, but there is little incentive to plant new trees. They grow very slowly. Young trees are sleek and sturdy and are particularly valuable for such uses as mine props. However, I don't want to give the impression that all northeastern maples are destined for the saw mill.

ANNOUNCER: No, I shouldn't think so. From the size of some sugar maples I saw last summer I imagine they're pretty old.

PMA: Oh, yes. Some of the sugar bushes --- as a group of maple trees is called --- have been in the same family for as long as two hundred years. These trees are real monarchs of the forest. They're rough barked and large in diameter, and many of their owners are mighty proud of them. And I can tell you that the folks who have maple sugar bushes

PMA: are also mighty busy at "running off" time.
(continued)

ANNOUNCER: Just what does happen at "running off" time?

PMA: Well, first the weather has to be just right --- not too hot and not too cold.

ANNOUNCER: And what would ideal weather be?

PMA: The temperature should be cold at night --- about 20 degrees, and the daytime "thawing out" temperature should be about 50 degrees. The maple sugar crop is extremely sensitive to weather. If it gets too cold, the sap stops flowing. If it's too warm the trees begin to bud prematurely, and that brings tapping to an abrupt end. You see, in the summer time the leaves manufacture the sugar that is essential for the tree's growth. Some of the sugar is stored in the trunk and roots, and in early spring it flows into the sap.

ANNOUNCER: And when the sugar starts flowing in the sap, then the trees are tapped.

PMA: That's exactly what happens.

ANNOUNCER: Has the tapping process changed much from the old days?

PMA: Very little. Oh, they've substituted galvanized spiles, or spigots, for the old-fashioned wooden ones, and the old crude kettles, the birch-bark tanks have been modernized, but essentially tapping

PMA: (continued) is pretty much as it was in pioneer days.

ANNOUNCER: Then you mean all they do is bore a hole in the bark and let the sap flow into the buckets.

PMA: "Drip" might be a better term than "flow." It's a pretty slow process. When the buckets are filled they're either emptied into carrying pails, or directly into a gathering tank, depending on the volume of the run. Then the sap is hauled off to the sugar camp.

ANNOUNCER: And that's where it's made into the products we know?

PMA: Yes, _____. By a process of evaporation we get maple sirup and sugar. Since the sap is about 95 to 97 percent water it takes about 45 gallons of sap to make one gallon of sirup. The sap is boiled in shallow open pans over a roaring fire. When the sap has reached the consistency of sirup it is poured off and strained through felt. It's then packed in drums or cans and sold locally or in bulk to distributors.

ANNOUNCER: Then to get maple sugar you just boil the sirup longer.

PMA: That's right. Incidentally, to get eight pounds of maple sugar it takes one gallon of sirup which weighs about 11 pounds.

ANNOUNCER: I suppose, _____, most of the sap goes into sirup.

PMA: All but about 5 percent. That was not the case, though, back in 1860. That year the Federal Census first provided an authentic record of maple products. At that time more than three-fourths of all the sap gathered was made into sugar. As a matter of fact, the early settlers in the northern parts of the United States and even some as far south as Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia depended heavily upon maple trees for their sugar. Even today a good part of the sugar is used right on the farms where it's produced, or sold locally.

ANNOUNCER: Apart from being made into little soldiers and heart shaped candies, what other use does maple sugar have?

PMA: It's primarily used for flavoring. Maple sugar, incidentally, is not refined, so it does not compete with beet or cane sugar.

ANNOUNCER: I guess its relative high price in relation to other sugars has resulted in less and less being made each year.

PMA: Probably the most important factor in the decline of maple sugar production is the ready marketability of sirup.

ANNOUNCER: Speaking of marketability, what are the prospects for this year's crop?

PMA: So far this season, the picture is much brighter than it was for the past two years. Although a spell of warm weather in January started an early run, cold weather arrived in time to slow it up to a normal seasonal run. With continued favorable weather --- cold nights and "thawing out" days, we should expect a good crop this year.

ANNOUNCER: Well, let's hope the weather behaves itself, for there's nothing finer than a stack of flap jacks oozing with maple sirup. Speaking of weather, I can imagine the women folk are keeping their fingers crossed that Easter will be a bright, sunny day.

PMA: Yes. There's nothing quite so disheartening to a woman that rain when she plans to show off her new hat. Of course, the homemaker will have more to plan than just her Easter wardrobe. You know most folks look forward to a rather festive Easter dinner.

ANNOUNCER: They sure do. Ham and lamb are the traditional Easter viands, aren't they?

PMA: Usually. This year, though, the thrifty homemaker will forego tradition if she's got her eye on her budget. You know lamb and ham are not in good

Journal of Quality 117

WATSON AND WATSON: THE WATSONS

PMA: (continued) supply right now. Those supplies that are available are fairly high in price.

ANNOUNCER: Any suggestions for substitutes?

PMA: Yes, indeed. Both beef and poultry are in far better supply this year than the other meats.

ANNOUNCER: Well, I'd be happy with either a good beef or poultry dish --- that is, if there were plenty of good vegetables to go with it.

PMA: There's no dearth on that score. There are plenty of potatoes.

ANNOUNCER: So I've heard.

PMA: And there also plenty of sweetpotatoes. Snowy heads of cauliflower are in good supply on many markets, and so are onions. Every northeast market boasts cabbages and carrots in abundant numbers. And for the salad course at that Easter dinner, there's plenty of lettuce.

ANNOUNCER: Are there any extra special treats around?

PMA: Well, I don't know what you consider an extra special treat. But a few markets have plentiful supplies of avocados, while others have lots of mushrooms and radishes.

ANNOUNCER: And what about the fruits?

PMA: There are no new arrivals to announce.

Apples and oranges are still holding their own, though.

ANNOUNCER: Well, since we always associate Easter with eggs will there be enough to satisfy the demand?

PMA: Oh, yes. They are in fairly abundant supply throughout the northeast. Homemakers should find all they need for use in cooking, with a few left over to hard cook and dye for young Easter-egg hunters. Incidentally, with the new sugar stamp some homemakers may feel they can splurge a little on a super-duper Easter dessert.

ANNOUNCER: That's a fine idea. I'm afraid that our time ^{up} is about/now, so let me say 'twas nice having you with us this (morning) (afternoon.) Listen in again next _____ when we will bring you another edition of YOUR FAMILY'S FOOD with _____ of the _____ office of the Production and Marketing Administration.

* * * *

